THE END
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THE END

YEARS IN THE FUTURE, AFTER THE DEATHS OF FRANKLIN AND VALERIA RICHARDS, THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE NO LONGER MARVEL'S FIRST FAMILY...AS A MATTER OF FACT, THEY AREN'T MUCH OF A FAMILY AT ALL.

REED RICHARDS, MR. FANTASTIC, HAS BEEN SEQUESTERED AWAY, HARD AT WORK IN HIS HIGH-ORBITING SATELLITE. SHE-HULK, HIS THERAPIST AND ONLY REGULAR HUMAN CONTACT, HAS REVEALED HERSELF AS THE SHAPE-SHIFTING SUPER-SKRULL.

TOGETHER, JOHNNY STORM, THE HUMAN TORCH, BEN GRIMM, THE THING, THE AVENGERS AND THE INHUMANS DEFEATED A GIANT KREE SENTRY ROBOT ON THE MOON, WHICH HAD CREATED A WORMHOLE INTO OUR SOLAR SYSTEM ALLOWING AN INVASION FORCE TO ENTER. WHEN THE TEAMS ATTEMPTED TO CONTACT REED, THEY WITNESSED HIS STRUGGLE WITH THE SUPER-SKRULL, RESULTING IN THEM BOTH BEING CAST INTO THE NEGATIVE ZONE AND THE CLUTCHES OF ANNIHILUS.

MEANWHILE, SUE STORM, THE INVISIBLE WOMAN, ON THE TRAIL OF AN ANCIENT KREE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MYSTERY, FINDS HERSELF DEEP BENEATH THE OCEAN FLOOR. SHE IS SURROUNDED BY THE LEGIONS OF THE MOLE MAN, WHO HAS DESIGNS ON FINALLY CONQUERING THE SURFACE WORLD.

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DEEP BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH...
THE CITADEL OF THE ELDER GODS...
IT WAS PLUNGED HERE FROM THE SURFACE BY THE ANCIENT ONES TO HIDE THEIR GREATEST TREASURE...THE ORB OF GNOMON!
MY LOYAL FOLLOWERS HAVE WORKED FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES TO DRAIN THE LAVA SEA FROM THIS CAVERN.
BUT YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU, MRS. RICHARDS? IS THAT NOT WHY YOU ARRIVED WHEN MY PLAN IS SO CLOSE TO FRUITION?
I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT YOUR PLAN--
LIAR! ONCE AGAIN THE FANTASTIC FOUR SEEK TO THWART ME...BUT THE ORB IS MINE...
IT WILL RESTORE MY VIGOR AND GRANT ME THE POWER TO PURGE THE SURFACE OF HUMAN INFESTATION.
Y'KNOW, ALL OF THIS ENGINEERING IS SO IMPRESSIVE I'D HAVE FELT BAD ABOUT MAKING IT A WASTED EFFORT...
RESTRAIN HER!

...BUT YOU'RE SUCH AN EVIL NUTCASE YOU NEED TO BE STOPPED.
YOU CANNOT ESCAPE, MRS. RICHARDS.
SURRENDER NOW--YOUR CHAOTIC FLIGHT WILL CARRY YOU OFF THE PIER.
THEN I MUST BE GETTING MORE AERODYNAMIC...

...BECAUSE THIS IS WHERE I WANTED TO GO.
I'M GOING TO FIND THE ORB.
YOU CAN'T GO INTO THE LAVA.
NOT EVEN MY SILICON MEN CAN ENDURE THAT HEAT.
IT WILL BE A FIRST FOR ME...
...AND I'LL HAPPILY ADMIT I'M SCARED WITLESS.
BUT YOU GAVE ME THE STRENGTH TO GO ON, MOLE MAN--YOU RESTORED MY FAITH...

FAITH? YOU'RE INSANE... YOU ARE GOING TO DIE!
I'VE BEEN ON THE TRAIL OF THE ORB FOR MANY, MANY YEARS...
...BUT NOT UNTIL NOW, WHEN YOU SAID ITS NAME OUT LOUD, DID I EVER BELIEVE... TRULY BELIEVE...IT WAS REAL.
FAITH... IS ALL I'VE EVER HAD--
--EVERYTHING ELSE WAS TAKEN AWAY.

DO THE COSMIC DISTORTIONS ORIGINATE FROM THIS STATION OR NOT, MAC-RONN?
THEY DO, GREAT ACCUSER.... OR MORE ACCURATELY, THEY *WILL*.
FROM THIS PROXIMITY I CAN DISCERN THE GALACTIC SHOCK WAVES ARE TRAVELLING *BACKWARDS* IN TIME TOWARDS NEARBY COORDINATES.
IN A REVERSAL OF CAUSE AND EFFECT, THE TEMPORAL RIPPLES PRECEDE THE INCIDENT WHICH WILL CAUSE THEM.
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THEORY...ONLY *POWER*.
THE SOURCE OF POWER WILL BE SHARED BY THE SHI'AR AND THE KREE, RONAN.
KLAMP!
AS WAS AGREED WITH YOUR MASTER, PRAETOR. BUT WHILE I PROCEED WITH MY TROOPS...
...YOU AND YOUR GUARD MUST REMAIN HERE TO PREVENT ANY OUTSIDE FORCE FROM INTERFERING WITH OUR MISSION.
TOO LATE FOR THAT!

WE CAME TO INVESTIGATE THE COMMUNICATIONS BREAK AND DOCKED AT THE OTHER END OF THE ASTEROID SHORTLY BEFORE YOU ARRIVED.
YOUR PRESENCE HERE IS A DIRECT VIOLATION OF THE QUARANTINE TREATY.
LEAVE... NOW!
I AM THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF LAW, HUMAN.
THERE IS BUT ONE PUNISHMENT FOR ANY WHO CHALLENGE ME.
KILL THEM ALL!

NEARBY...
YOWWWW!
WUFF
THAT WAS WILD!
EASY, BOY...Y'DID GOOD!
LOCKJAW IS TOTALLY BEAT, BEN. IT WAS A LONG TELEPORT AND COMPENSATING FOR THE RELATIVE ACCELERATION MUST'VE BEEN TOUGH...
IT WUZ A GAMBLE BUT WE HADDA BYPASS THE FIGHT IN THE DOCKIN' BAY.
AGREED... BUT--
Y'THINK I'VE GONE SOFT 'CAUSE I'M SICK WORRYIN' OVER ALICIA AN' THE KIDS?
NO. OF COURSE NOT.
WE GOT NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON OR WHO'S INVOLVED. GETTIN' REED BACK IS TOP PRIORITY.
I AGREE, BEN...

...BUT YOU HAVEN'T QUITE THOUGHT THIS STRATEGY THROUGH.
STRATEGY. IS THAT ONE OF THEM CLEVER WORDS Y'LEARNED WHILE Y'BIN LEADIN' THE AVENGERS?
BEN, THE NEGATIVE ZONE IS AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE... IT'S BIG AND IT CONFUSES OUR SENSES. HOW ARE WE GOING TO FIND REED?
JOHN, I'VE KNOW'D REED FOR A REAL LONG TIME--SINCE WE WUZ FRESHMEN IN COLLEGE. HE HAD SOME REAL IRRITATING HABITS...
ALWAYS PUT THE CAP ON THE TOOTHPASTE; ALWAYS ROLLED HIS SOCKS; ALWAYS PUT THE BOOK BACK ON THE SHELF...
HE'S A MAN OF HABIT... BUT HE NEVER MADE THE SAME MISTAKE TWICE.
SO ONE THING YOU CAN BET YER LIFE ON--AFTER ALL OF HIS CRAZY ADVENTURES IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE--
IF REED WAS WORKING ANYWHERE NEAR THE ZONE GATE--
HE'LL BE WEARING A HOMING DEVICE.
YUP!

NEPTUNE'S RING.
...HOW COULD YOU CONTACT THE KREE...THE QUARANTINE FIELD BLOCKS ALL TRANSIT AND COMMUNICATION.
EVERYTHING FROM RADIO SIGNALS TO HYPER-WAVE IS SCRAMBLED. WHAT ELSE IS THERE? CARRIER PIGEONS?!
AT LAST YOU CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF A LOW-TECH SOLUTION.
WHAT?
A FLASHING LIGHT FROM A PREDETERMINED COORDINATE... TRANSMITTING MORSE CODE.
A FLASHING LIGHT-- THAT'S IT... THAT'S...
GENIUS!
WERE YOUR ANDROID CREATIONS ALSO THE PRODUCT OF YOUR LOW-TECH GENIUS? IS THAT WHY YOU WERE FORCED TO CALL UPON MY UNIQUE ALCHEMY?
THE CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS YOU CREATE ARE INDEED UNIQUE, DIABLO.
THE VISION!
YOU WILL NOT LIVE TO REPORT OUR LOCATION TO YOUR COMRADES AVENGER.
THERE IS NO NEED...
KOOKKOOM
THE RESIDUE FROM YOUR ATTACK ON CHARON PROVIDED A SINGULAR WAVELENGTH PROFILE FOR A SPECTROGRAPHIC SENSOR SWEEP.

SKRRKKKKKKKK
...THEY ARE ALREADY HERE!
YOU HAVE NOT BESTED THE THINKER. I PREPARED FOR EVERY CONTINGENCY.
BEHOLD MY UNSTOPPABLE MANDROIDS.
A MOMENT, THINKER. I SUGGEST YOU REEVALUATE YOUR POSITION.
THE HULL OF YOUR SHIP IS BREACHED. THE ATMOSPHERE ABOARD IS BEING MAINTAINED WITH A FORCE FIELD GENERATED BY CAPTAIN MARVEL...
...AND IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT DISTRACT HER...
...BECAUSE WHEN I PHASED ABOARD, I REMOVED YOUR PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT GENERATORS.

I BET.
DAUGHTER!
THE TIME FOR CONTEMPLATION AND PREPARATION IS OVER.
I HAVE THE ORB.
YOU'RE SURPRISED I CAME BACK?
NO... THAT YOU WERE SUCCESSFUL.
I'M HIGHLY MOTIVATED.

YOU ARE INJURED. ALLOW ME TO--
IT CAN WAIT. DO YOU STILL WANT TO STOP ME?
I HAVE PONDERED YOUR CAUSE SINCE LAST WE MET--
--AND WITH MY FATHER'S GUIDANCE, I HAVE SEEN THAT I WAS WRONG TO JUDGE YOU.
HAVE YOU REVISED YOUR JUDGMENT, STEPHEN?
I MADE NO JUDGMENT.
I ADVISED YOU OF THE DANGERS YOU FACE...OF THE FORCES YOU PROPOSE TO UNLEASH.
WILL YOU HELP ME?
NO MATTER WHAT THE CONSEQUENCE?
IF I REFUSE, YOU WOULD ATTEMPT TO USE THE ORB YOURSELF?
YES!

THE NEGATIVE ZONE.
YOU WILL BE HONORED TO SEE THAT WHICH IS KNOWN ONLY TO MY MOST LOYAL SERVANTS, RICHARDS.
MASTER, ANOTHER TRESPASSER.
ANOTHER OF THE FOUR?
NO...THEY ARE MY ENEMIES ALSO. RICHARDS TRICKED ME HERE...
...AND I WILL GLADLY SERVE LORD ANNIHILUS TO HELP CONQUER THE HUMAN SCUM.
VERY WELL, A WILLING SERVANT IS ALWAYS OF USE TO ANNIHILUS...
TAKE HIM TO THE MINES.
NO... MERCY!
IT AMUSES ME THAT YOU WHO CLAIM TO FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND ALTRUISM HAVE SO MANY ENEMIES.
EVERY PHILOSOPHY HAS ITS OPPONENTS.

YOU THINK YOURSELF SUPERIOR-- ATTEMPTING TO CONSTRUCT BYWAYS OF INSTANT TRANSIT THROUGH MY REALM...
YOU KNOW ABOUT..?
HAHAAAHAHHA
YON ANTENNA IS FIXED ON THE REGION WHEREIN OUR DIMENSIONS INTERSECT. IT IS BUT A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL SYNCHRONIZATION OCCURS.
THEN I WILL EXPAND THAT PALTRY GATE INTO A MIGHTY RIFT. MY HORDES WILL SWARM INTO YOUR UNIVERSE...CONQUERING ALL BEFORE THEM.
TH■ DISRUPTED EXPERIMENT TRANSITS...THE INEXPLICABLE VARIABLES... IT WAS YOU--
YES. I DESTROYED YOUR PROBES BECAUSE I KNEW YOU WOULD PERSIST.
EACH SABOTAGED EXPERIMENT ALLOWED MY SCIENTISTS TO LEARN MORE OF YOUR SECRETS...
...OF THE FORMIDABLE SECURITY THAT HAS PREVENTED ME FROM ACCESSING YOUR GATEWAY.
I AM ANNIHILUS... I WILL BEND ALL CREATION TO MY WILL...
NOTHING CAN HALT MY DOMINATION OF ALL THAT IS--

LIKE WE AIN'T HEARD THAT BEFORE!!
BEN...?!
KRAMP
AND WHILE HE GETS TO STOMP THE UGLY EVIL TYRANT, I GET CROWD-CONTROL.
FSSH
JOHNNY... HOW...?
SAVE THE QUESTIONS, REED. DON'T YOU KNOW A RESCUE WHEN Y'SEE ONE?
JUS' PUT YER FLIGHT HARNESS ON AND LET'S GIT.
WE CAN'T GO YET.
JOHN, DESTROY THAT MACHINE--REDUCE IT TO SLAG! I'LL COVER BEN.
NO NEED, STRETCH. I GOT ANNIHILUS' POWER ROD...

...AN' HE AIN'T NOTHIN' WITHOUT HIS COSMIC BATTERY.
POW
NOW WE REALLY GOTTA GO, REED...WE GOT A SITUATION AT HOME.
IT CAN'T BE ANY WORSE THAN THE MESS I'VE CREATED HERE.
DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT, STRETCH. WHEN IT COMES TO ATTRACTIN' TROUBLE, YOU GET THE PRIZE.
I'VE [redacted] A FOOL, BEN.
YEAH... BUT I SHOULDA BEEN WATCHIN' YER BACK.
HEY, GUYS...WE CAN DO THIS LATER. LET'S GO.
SO WHAT EXACTLY HAS GONE WRONG BACK HOME?

HE FF ASTEROID.
THIS IS INSANITY. WE DO NOT EVEN KNOW WHY WE ARE FIGHTING.
I'D SAY SURVIVAL IS OUR IMMEDIATE CONCERN, T'CHALLA.
FOOLISH WOMAN. YOUR DEATH IS *INEVITABLE.*
BUT IT WON'T BE EASY.
AND IT'S ABOUT TO GET TOUGHER. THE AIR PRESSURE JUST CHANGED WITH THE CYCLING OF AN AIR LOCK...
...AND I CAN HEAR THE UNIQUE PURR OF A COSMIC SURFBOARD...

"...REINFORCEMENTS HAVE ARRIVED."

...THE SUPER-SKRULL WAS WORKING ALONE--I'VE GOT NO IDEA WHY RONAN IS HERE.

HAVE A LOOK-SEE WHAT HE'S UP TO ON THE SECURITY MONITORS. I WANT TO CHECK ON LOCKJAW.

SLEEPING LIKE A BABY.

IF Y'D SHOWED CRYSTAL HALF THE ATTENTION YOU DO HER MUTT, SHE'DA STAYED WITH YA.

SHE STILL WANTS ME.

LOOKS LIKE WORLD WAR FOUR BROKE OUT IN THE DOCKING BAY... WE'D BETTER GET THERE FAST!

ONE MOMENT, BEN...I NEED TO MAKE SURE ANNIHILUS CAN'T FOLLOW US.

AUTO-DESTRUCT?

EVEN WHEN INACTIVE THERE A LINK BETWEEN THIS GATE AND THE ONE IN WYATT'S LAB. ANNIHILUS COULD USE THAT CONDUIT TO INVADE OUR DIMENSION.

BUT JOHN *DESTROYED* HIS MACHINE!

00:59:59

TEK

HE MAY HAVE ANOTHER... THE RISK IS TOO GREAT...AND MY STUPID PRIDE HAS CAUSED MORE THAN ENOUGH TROUBLE.

HOLD THAT THOUGHT, REED...WE GOT COMPANY!

VOOP

SUSAN!
IT'S SO WONDERFUL TO--
SUE?!
WHA...!
DON'T TRY TO RESIST... ALL I NEED DO TO INCAPACITATE YOU ALL IS SHRINK THE FIELD AND ELIMINATE THE AIR.
SUSIE... C'MON. THIS AIN'T FUNNY.
IT CAN'T REALLY BE SUSAN...
SIS? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME AND I NEED YOU ALL TO DO EXACTLY AS I ASK...

PLUTO SPACE. THE S.H.I.E.L.D. ARK.
I'D USE THUMBSCREWS IF I THOUGHT IT WOULD HELP...
...BUT NEITHER OF THE TRAITOROUS SKUNKS KNOWS ANYTHING IMPORTANT.
EXCEPT THAT EARTH MAY BE UNDER ATTACK.
WE COULDN'T GET THERE IN TIME TO HELP--ASSUMING THE ATTACK IS REAL.
THE TRANSMISSION BLACKOUT IS REAL. EVEN MY CONSCIOUSNESS TRANSFER IS BLOCKED.
WE SHOULD HAVE GONE STRAIGHT TO EARTH FROM NEPTUNE.
NO, I WANTED YOU ALL HERE. THE KREE ORDERED OUR DESTRUCTION--THAT MEANS THEY DON'T WANT US IN THIS SECTOR... SO WE STAY.
NICK, THE COMPROMISED AREA OF THE QUARANTINE SHIELD IS BEING BREACHED BY SOMETHING COMING FROM THE FAR SIDE.
MAIN SCREEN, CONTESSA.
WELL, AT LEAST NOW WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST...

"...THE ENTIRE KREE AND SHI'AR WAR FLEETS!"
To be concluded...

WHICH HEROES WILL MAKE UP THE NEW

Fantastic Four®

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